and smiles weary. Then I brushes back the yellow curls from the youngster's pink-and-white face, gets a view of them big dark eyes with the long black lashes and the cheek dimples, and lets him spring one of them cherub smiles on me, and—well, I just has to cuddle him up and let him coo in my ear.

"Ain't afraid of me; eh, little Pete?" I asks. "How's that?"

"Oo nice mans," says he, turnin' them big eyes on me.

"That settles it!" says I. "If that's the way you feel about me, that daddy of yours is goin' to have another chance. Looks like a hopeless job, Mrs. Reynolds, but we'll see what can be done. Just wait until I can get into my street clothes and—"

I breaks off when I sees Peabody Hatch standin' in the gym door starin' at me.

"I beg pardon," says he.

"Don't bother," says I. "And say, you remember what I was tellin' you about the next generation? Well, here's one of the results. Have a look while I'm dressin'. Aw, don't be afraid. Clean as the inside of a new-laid egg. Catch him!"

I don't know whether Peabody ever had a strange four-year-old chucked at him that way before or not. I didn't stop to ask, but dropped little Pete in his arms and dashed into the dressin'-room.

"Pete gets out his violin to give the boy his daily lesson. 'He's goin' to be some player,' says the father."

MUST have been there five minutes or more; but when I came back, there sits Hatch in my desk-chair, chattin' away chummy with the youngster.

"Oh!" says I. "Thought you'd gone. I didn't mean to give you a steady job."

"I—I don't mind a bit," says he. "Pete and I have just been getting acquainted. Haven't we, Pete? We are going to have a nice ride in the honk-honk, too."

"Eh?" says I, gawpin' at him.

"You were going to take them home, weren't you?" says he. "Well, my car is outside. Let's see; Eleventh Avenue, did you say?"

Mrs. Pete looks at me to see if it's all right, and when I gives her the O. K. sign she nods.

And say, I don't suppose there's been a limousine stopped in that block before for a month. It's a rummy-lookin' double-decker we lands in front of, the fire-escapes draped with old beddin' and the street full of kids playin' tip-cat and jumpin' rope. But Peabody insists on luggin' the youngster up three flights of smelly stairs and into this barren two-room tenement at the back.

I hadn't said a word about this bein' the fam'ly of the young Italian I'd been describin' so enthusiastic, and I didn't mean to let on. Not a word. As we steps in, though, a slump-shouldered object lifts a pasty face from the bare table and stares at us. It's young Pete, and he's a sad mess.

"Huh!" says I. "Turned up again, did you? You're a fine specimen, you are! What you got to say for yourself?"

He sort of shivers and then slumps again, his head between his arms.

"Feelin' low, are you?" I goes on. "No wonder! But let's hear what alibi you got. Come, give some account of yourself."

"I—I ain't any good, Professor," he whines. "I didn't go for to stay off that way, but—but I got in with the old gang. That's what soured the old man on me. He won't even take me on shinin' shoes along with him."

I glances at Peabody to see if he's made the connection. And he has.

"Oh!" says he. "This can't be the one you were telling me was such a—"

"You win," says I. "This is him. And I take it all back. I guess my proposition about the second generation was all wrong."

NEXT I turns to young Pete again and makes him state the exact situation. It's as bad as it looks. He's flat broke—nothin' in the house for the kids to eat, and the agent has served notice that he'll dump 'em out next Wednesday.

"Then what'll become of the wife and babies?" I asks.

"I—I don't know," says he dreary. "If you'd only give me another chance, Professor!"

"Yes, and how long would it be," I demands, "before you'd be runnin' with that bunch of tin-horns again?"

He just drops his chin.

"What you need, Pete," says I, "is to be introduced to some real work. That's what your old man was raised on. He's told me about it. Outdoor work, in the fields. Why, he dug ditches when he first came to this country. He didn't start in by wearin' yellow shoes and rainbow ties and tryin' to sop up all the red ink on Eighth Avenue. You're city-spoiled, that's what's the matter with you. Mostly my fault, too. I should have shunted you out in the country, where most of your people belong, anyway. You ought to be there now. Your kids need it, too. But I suppose you wouldn't try livin' anywhere but in town."

"I—I'd try anything," he groans.

"Huh!" says I. "Wish I had a place to put you on. We'd see."

Then, when I was least expectin' it, Peabody speaks up.

"It happens that I have," says he.

"Wha-a-at?" says I. "One you can spare? Say, where is it?"

"I fear it isn't much of a place," says Peabody. "Just a little ten-acre tract with an old shack on it, 'way up in the Connecticut valley. I remember father sending one of our old gardeners up there on a pension. He's been gone several years, and the house has been shut up ever since. I've tried to sell it, even offered to give it away. It's rather an out-of-the-way place, I believe, and almost worthless as a farm, but if—"

"What do you say, Pete?" I breaks in. "Willin' to take a chance on it?"

"Anything to get out of this," says he.

"How about you?" I asks Mrs. Pete.

"I am country girl," says she. "I no like city, never."

"Then it's a go," says I. "Much obliged, Hatch. Give us the location, and to-morrow I'll take a day off and tow 'em out there."

"But see here," protests Peabody. "This farm, you know, is a mile or more from the nearest village. Why, they could starve out there and no one would know anything about it."

"They could starve just as easy here on Eleventh Avenue and nobody would care," says I. "Besides, I'm plannin' on doin' a little grub-stakin'."

"Hm-m-m!" says he, glancin' down at Little Pete, who's still holdin' him by the hand. "I think it would be decent of you to let me join in this—er—experiment. It's my farm, you know."

"But you don't believe much in the second crop," says I.

"I'm beginning to believe in the third, though," says he.

"Then you're 'most qualified to join," says I. "Let's get busy."

SO by the middle of the next afternoon I've landed young Pete and his fam'ly a good two hundred miles from the nearest bottle of Chianti. Looked like it might have been a thousand after we'd left the train and been driven for an hour over hilly country roads.

And when we stops in front of this weather-beaten old house, with the windows boarded up and the front door almost choked by bushes, I don't blame Mrs. Pete for starin' around kind of wild.

It's on a back road, you know, and down in sort of a hollow where a brook runs through, with nothing in sight but bare, rocky fields all shut in by woods.

"Won't be bothered with neighbors, will you?" says I. "Come, Pete, let's unload these groceries and things."

While we was doin' that and pryin' the boards off the windows, Mrs. Pete goes wanderin' around with the youngsters.

It's a mild, early spring afternoon, with the green just startin' out on the trees, and if it hadn't been so still and deserted around the place it might not have seemed so forlorn.

"Course," I says to Pete, tryin' to chirk him up, "you got to rough it for a while. That won't hurt you any. What you can do to make a livin' here, though, is by me. That's up to you."

"I know," says he, sort of dull and desperate.

"Seems to be plenty of furniture, such as it is," I goes on, "and dishes and beddin'; and if you can only raise—"

"Pete! Pete!" we hears Mrs. Reynolds callin' excited. "Come, Pete!"

WE thought something had happened to one of the kids, and out we dashed panicky. No; there they were down by the brook, all safe on the bank, and Mrs. Pete standin' beside 'em, wavin' her hands.

"See!" says she as we came up, pointin' to a bush. "For baskets! Willow wood! We make fine baskets from him. I show you, Pete."

"There you are, right off the reel!" says I. "A home industry. I'll give you an order for half a dozen clothes hampers to start with."

"And look!" goes on Mrs. Pete, runnin' back from the brook a little ways and divin' into the soft black ground with her hands. "For celery. Nice dirt for celery."

"Is that so?" says I. "Sure about that?"

"Me, I show you nex' fall," laughs Mrs. Pete, her cheeks flushin' excited. "Celery and baskets. With place like that in the old country we make much money."

"Pete," says I, "I see where you got a swell business manager right in the fam'ly. You ain't going to starve. You're going to show the native-born how to go back to the land and not have the land go back on you. But you're goin' to develop a few new muscles."

"I'm willing," says Pete.

BEFORE I left I got him to promise me a line now and then sayin' how they were gettin' on.

Well, he did send a couple of postals durin' the two months; but what he reports is so sketchy, and Peabody keeps askin' me so constant for details, that here the other day I just had to make a trip up there.

Honest, I hardly knew the place. Why, here was flowers growin', the shrubbery trimmed up, a fine big garden comin' along, rows and rows of celery started, and in one corner of the kitchen is a reg'lar basket factory. You ought to see the change in them kids, too. Little Pete has grown inches, he's got roses in his cheeks, and the baby is fat as butter.

Pete, he's browned up and husky, and Mrs. Pete is gettin' to be more or less ornamental again.

I HAD planned to stay over only one train; but there's so much to see and talk about—the cow Peabody had sent up, and the chickens they was raisin', and the old white horse they'd bought on celery futures—that the first thing I knew it's too late to get back that night. So I stops over.

And if either Pete or the wife was homesick for Eleventh Avenue, it didn't come out that evenin'.

After Mrs. Pete finishes the supper dishes she sits down and tackles the framework of a fancy lunch-hamper I'd brought specifications for, while Pete gets out his violin and proceeds to give the boy his daily lesson in handlin' the bow.

"He's goin' to be some player," says Pete. "Baby, too. Watch her."

She's sittin' up in her crib, beatin' time with her little pink fists and takin' it all in.

Afterwards Pete plays me a couple of old Polish songs that Mrs. Pete had hummed for him, and she joins in with an old accordion. So altogether it was quite a jolly party we had.

WHEN Peabody blows in next day he wants to know all about it.

"Well," says I, "it looks like the second crop was goin' to make good, after all. Our little transplantin' stunt seems to be turnin' out fine."

"Bully!" says he. "But, tell me, what are we raising up there?"

"Mostly willow baskets and assorted garden truck," I tells him; "but on the side I guess we're raisin' a young orchestra."

"Really!" says he. "Then that land can't be wholly worthless, can it, to produce such a variety of things?"

"Not with the right people on it," says I. "It's just a case of connectin' the second crop with the land to improve 'em both."

"Perhaps that's the answer to our big problem," says Peabody. "I'd like to see it tried extensively some day."

"Maybe you will," says I. "We ain't got the only bulgin' foreheads in captivity, you know."